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Amber Plan going nationwide

04/13/2001

By SELWYN CRAWFORD / The Dallas Morning News

The Amber Plan – the police and media joint alert system created by Arlington officials to help quickly recover abducted children – is going nationwide.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children plans to take control of the widely acclaimed program this summer, providing free Amber Plan kits for law enforcement officers and broadcasters nationwide.

Each kit will contain a handbook explaining how to organize an Amber Plan, as well as a training videotape featuring many of the North Texas officials and residents involved in the development of the original plan.

"When people go on vacation they ought to be able to go to another state and when they hear that sound, they'll know that's the Amber Plan," said Joann Donnellan, media relations manager for the national center. "It's not only going to help act to help recover abducted children, but it also will help act as a deterrent to this kind of crime."

Program start

The Amber Plan was developed in 1996 in response to the abduction of 9-year-old Amber Hagerman from the parking lot of an East Arlington grocery store and her slaying. No one has been charged in that crime.

Tarrant County Sheriff Dee Anderson, who was the Arlington police spokesman when Amber was abducted, helped develop the plan in which area radio and television stations are notified when a suspected abduction occurs. The stations immediately interrupt programming to broadcast identifying information about the child and the suspect.

Aiding in recovery

The Amber Plan has been credited for helping lead to the recovery of seven children in North Texas and a total of 10 nationwide.

Sheriff Anderson, a member of the Amber Plan Task Force, said he is

grateful for the collaboration with the national center.

"It helps us tremendously because of the reputation that they [the national center] carry nationally," Mr. Anderson said. "They are tremendously well-funded and bring so much to the table as far as their ability to educate.

"Their dream and their goal is to have national training courses to bring people in and teach people how to successfully run a [Amber Plan] program. We've been operating on a shoestring and had to beg and borrow to get people to bring things on the table. They've got a big budget there."

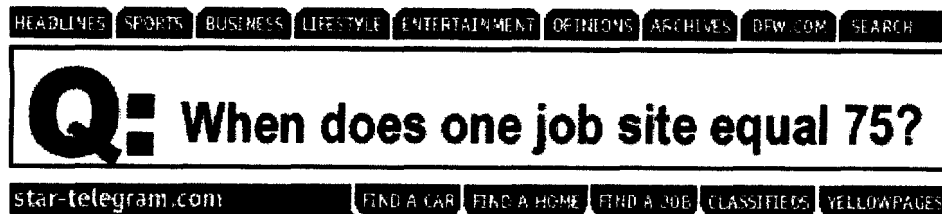
Steve Mace, media coordinator for the Amber Plan Task Force and president of a Dallas public relations firm, said 19 programs similar to the Amber Plan operate in various states and communities across the country. But he said that the national center's involvement would provide an even bigger safety net for children.

"The national center is the perfect platform for this because they are the organization that deals with all kinds of situations involving missing and exploited children," Mr. Mace said, adding that the National Association of Broadcasters has endorsed the Amber Plan. "We are delighted with the national center's involvement and see it as the perfect vehicle to bring this program to the national community."

Feedback: Contact the editors of the *Arlington Morning News* and Arlington.com.

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Amber Plan to be distributed across the nation

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children readies the information for use by many communities.

Date **April 13, 2001**

Source **Daisy Nguyen Star-Telegram Staff Writer**

Section **NEWS**

Edition **ARLINGTON**

Five years after its start in Arlington, a **plan** to quickly help find abducted or missing children soon will be available nationally to assist law enforcement agencies.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C., expects to have the **Amber Plan** ready for distribution by June.

The **plan** is named for 9-year-old **Amber** Hagerman of Arlington, who was abducted in January 1996. Her body was found four days later on the banks of a north Arlington creek.

Working with the local **Amber** Task Force, the center is creating 5,000 kits, containing a handbook and a videotape, for law enforcement and broadcasters to use. The initiative is being promoted as "**AMBER PLAN**," America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response.

"Awesome is the only word I can find to describe it," said **Amber's** mother, Donna Morris. "There are less missing children because of the **plan**."

Under the **Amber Plan**, radio and TV stations interrupt programming to seek help in confirmed child abductions. Since its creation in late 1996, the system has turned into a powerful tool, especially in the early hours of an abduction investigation.

"The **plan** is so simple and the rewards are incredible by saving a child," said the national center's spokeswoman, Joann Donnellan.

The **plan** attracted national interest because of its effectiveness, an endorsement from Congress and publicity in publications, including Reader's Digest and the Christian Science Monitor.

There are 19 emergency alert **plans** nationwide that are similar to the **Amber Plan**, including ones in Oklahoma, Florida and Arkansas and Kansas City, Mo.; Raleigh, N.C., and Cincinnati, Ohio.

Donnellan was in Arlington this week shooting footage for the video, which features a re-enactment of the November 1998 abduction of Raye Lee Bradbury. The 2-month-old was returned to her parents less than 30 minutes after Arlington police activated the **Amber Plan**.

Donnellan said the kit would offer a list of criteria to help police use the system. It can be ineffective if

it's overused, said Tarrant County Sheriff Dee Anderson, who helped develop the system.

The kit would recommend that law enforcement officers activate the **plan** when a child is missing and they believe the child is in grave danger. It also advises that enough descriptive information be available to help the public find the child, Donnellan said.

The **Amber Plan** has been credited with directly solving at least one child abduction and playing a role in the resolution of six others in the Fort Worth-Dallas area.

The system has also been responsible for the recovery of two children in Oklahoma and one child in Florida. It has been activated 35 times in the Fort Worth-Dallas area since December 1996, said Steve Mace, **Amber** task force spokesman.

Last month, the National Association of Broadcasters endorsed the **plan** and said it will help publicize it. The Federal Communications Commission is considering adding a "Child Abduction" event code to the Emergency Alert System to make it easier for broadcasters to activate the **Amber Plan**, Donnellan said.

"The **plan** is truly a deterrent," Anderson said. "If someone thinks about abducting a child, that person has to think about the **Amber Plan**."

Tyler Cox, manager for radio station KMEQ/96.7 FM and chairman of the **Amber** task force, said Arlington should be proud of the **plan**'s national debut.

"It came out of a horrible tragedy, but this community has set a great example for the rest of the country," Cox said.

Daisy Nguyen, (817) 548-5420 dnguyen@star-telegram.com

The **Amber Plan**

The **Amber Plan**, an emergency alert system to help quickly locate abducted or missing children that started in Arlington five years ago, is to be available nationally in June.

Established **Amber Plans**

Cities * Arlington, Fort Worth and Dallas * Houston * Beaumont * Raleigh, N.C. * Columbia, S.C. * Memphis, Tenn. * Kansas City, Mo. * Jefferson City, Mo. * Topeka, Kan. * Tucson, Ariz. * Santa Ana, Calif. * Corcoran, Calif.

Regional systems * "St. Louis Area Regional Abduction Alert" Belleville, Ill., St. Louis and St. John, Mo. * "Child Abduction Alert" Greater Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky and Southeastern Indiana

States * Arkansas * Florida * Oklahoma

Amber Plans in development

Cities * Denver * Las Vegas * Miami * Minneapolis * Phoenix * Richmond, Va. * Riverside County, Calif. * Sacramento, Calif. * Salt Lake City * San Diego * Washington, D.C. * Winnipeg, Manitoba

States * Pennsylvania * Michigan * Washington

Source: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Washington, D.C.

EXHIBIT B

**Established AMBER* Plans
and
AMBER Plans in Development
as of May 30, 2001**

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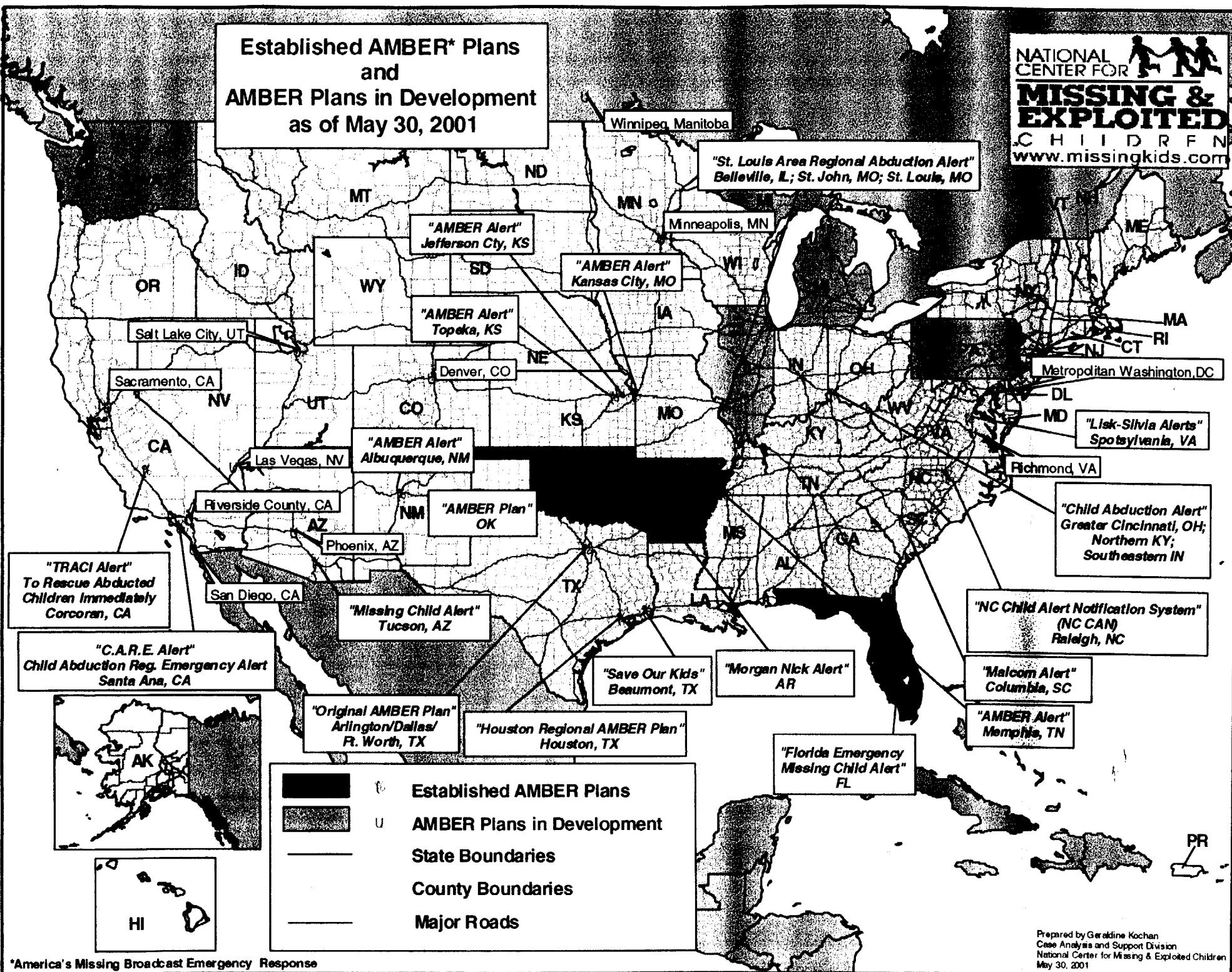


EXHIBIT C



Friday, June 8, 2001

Broadcasters sign on to kidnap alerts

The 'Amber plan' uses the Emergency Alert System to enlist the public in nabbing child abductors.

By Craig Savoye Special to The Christian Science Monitor

Emergency broadcasts - radio or TV messages preceded by those attention-getting shrill beeps - are increasingly being credited with saving the lives of children across the US.

But the youngsters aren't being protected from severe weather or a civil emergency. They're being rescued from a more insidious danger: kidnappers.

Spurred by success stories in Dallas, Tulsa, Okla., and several other US cities, law-enforcement agencies and children's advocates are pushing for greater use of the Emergency Alert System to enlist the public in nabbing child abductors.

"You can't believe how many times we've slapped our heads and said, 'Why didn't we think of this before?' " says Dee Anderson, sheriff of Tarrant County near Dallas, where use of the system has helped in the recovery of eight children in three years. "It's so simple and works so well, and on top of that it doesn't cost any money. It's no wonder it's spreading like wildfire across the country."

The antikidnapping system - called the "Amber plan" - is named after Amber Hagerman, an Arlington, Texas, girl who, while riding her bike, was abducted and murdered. Her death in 1997 galvanized local radio stations to work with police to try to thwart such crimes in the future.

Just last fall, the Amber plan helped save two children in Tulsa. On the evening of Sept. 14, a couple left their children in the backseat of their pink Geo Tracker - along with keys in the ignition - and dashed into a store for groceries. Another couple, high on drugs, stole the car with the children inside.

Police activated the Amber plan, and broadcasts about the abducted children galvanized the city. Citizens hopped in their cars and searched neighborhood streets for the stolen car. Throughout a tense night, aided by a flood of tips, Tulsa police stopped pink Geo Trackers 48 times.

Some drivers hung up signs reading, "I've been searched already."

At 6 a.m., a fisherman who had seen an emergency message on TV spotted the car, abandoned 70 miles outside of Tulsa. He notified authorities, and the children were safely recovered. Police later arrested the abductors.

"The Amber plan was a huge success," says Capt. Tim Jones of the Tulsa Police Department. "It was nice to see the media get behind this in a big, big way."

Amber plans have now spread to 10 other metropolitan areas and three states. Most were launched in the past 15 months, and another dozen cities are studying the idea.

Now, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) is embracing the concept. Over the next few months, the center plans to meet with police and media in America's 10 biggest media markets and press them to adopt some form of the original plan.

"The fact that there have been recoveries using the system has proven it can work," says Joann Donellan, who heads the program for the NCMEC. "It's another tool for law enforcement, and it's a way for broadcasters to serve their communities in the most meaningful way."

A single grim statistic underscores the push for Amber plans: Of children who are abducted and slain, 3 in 4 are killed within three hours of being kidnapped. Amber plan supporters say the ability to spread the word quickly is the best asset.

One of the Amber system's first successes came in 1998, when a baby sitter failed to return a six-week-old infant at the end of the day. Dallas police, working through the night, determined the baby sitter was moving from crack house to crack house, in search of drugs.

At 7 a.m. they faxed an Amber alert to two main radio stations in Dallas. The stations' broadcasts were then relayed to 40 other radio stations.

Within 40 minutes, a motorist with a cellphone spotted the car on the road, and even managed to pull alongside the vehicle to glimpse the baby in back. Police closed in, arrested the suspect, and recovered the baby.

Police in Dallas and elsewhere have strict criteria for issuing Amber alerts. Thousands of children are reported missing each year, but many are runaways or children involved in custody disputes. Experts say that annually about 300 kidnapped children are killed or never seen again. This is the group, they say, that can be helped by Amber plans.

In Oklahoma, the system has been used twice in one year of operation, with one clear-cut success. In Florida, half a dozen alerts have been issued in six months, with one successful resolution. In nearly four years, the Dallas area has used the Amber system about three dozen times. Nine of those incidents led to recovery of the abducted child, though in some cases it is not clear to what extent the system proved to be the key.

For instance, a young girl playing with a friend was snatched by a man in a truck. The girl was assaulted, but a few hours later set free on an Interstate highway. She told police her attacker became so agitated at hearing repeated descriptions of his vehicle on the radio that he ordered her out of the truck.

Subject: Emergency system helps foil kidnappings

Date: Mon, 09 Apr 2001 07:23:49 -0400

From: "Bud Gaylord" <bgaylord@ncmec.org> Internal

Organization: NCMEC

To: Joann Donnellan <Jdonnellan@ncmec.org>



<http://www.bergen.com:80/home/kidnap20010408.htm>



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TODAY'S NEWS

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OPINION

SPECIAL REPORTS

Emergency system helps foil kidnappings

Sunday, April 8, 2001

Special from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch

The system that warns St. Louis radio and TV audiences of a tornado or nuclear attack can now deliver alerts about the kind of crisis people might be able to end: a kidnapping.

The St. Louis Area Regional Abduction Alert program is modeled on a plan created in the Dallas-Fort Worth area after a 9-year-old girl was taken from her home and murdered in 1996. That system has been credited with the safe return of at least eight children.

The St. Louis program, which covers 15 counties in Missouri and Illinois, started in January.

The alert, which will be preceded by the same tones used in severe weather warnings, will include a description or photograph of the child and, if available, of the abductor and vehicle used.

The Justice Department estimates that 5,000 children are kidnapped by strangers every year. About 100 of them are murdered, and 200 are never seen again.

The first four hours after an abduction are crucial to saving a child's life. An FBI study found that 75 percent of the murdered childrer



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were killed in that early period.

Participating radio and television stations have agreed to rebroadcast the alert at least twice an hour during the first four hours. After that, stations will send out alerts every hour for the next 20 hours.

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Subject: Las Vegas SUN: Washoe County activates emergency alert system in child abductions

Date: Mon, 12 Mar 2001 08:09:50 -0500

From: "Bud Gaylord" <bgaylord@ncmec.org> Internal

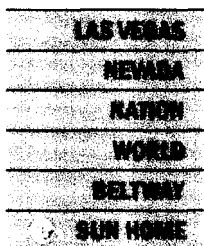
Organization: NCMEC

To: Joann Donnellan <jdonnellan@ncmec.org>

Charlie Apps <capps@ncmec.org>



<http://www.lasvegassun.com/sunbin/stories/nevada/2001/mar/09/511541056.html>



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March 09, 2001

Washoe County activates emergency alert system in child abductions

RENO, Nev. (AP) - Authorities in Washoe County and surrounding areas in Nevada and California have a new tool authorities hope will lead to more happier endings in missing children cases.

The Washoe County sheriff's office on Friday unveiled an emergency Child Abduction Alert Plan, also known as CAAP. The program allows law enforcement agencies to access the region's emergency alert system to quickly notify the public when a child is reported missing.

The plan was dedicated as the "Krystal CAAP Alert" in memory of 9-year-old Krystal Steadman, who was kidnapped from a Lake Tahoe apartment complex last year and murdered.

It is patterned after a similar program in Texas. The "Amber Alert" was launched in the Dallas-Fort

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Worth area in 1997 after the abduction and killing of 9-year-old Amber Hagerman. Since then, it has been activated more than 25 times and has led to the safe return of six children and one adult, officials said.

In Nevada, the regional emergency alert system covers Washoe, Douglas, Churchill, Pershing, Mineral, Lyon and Storey counties, northern Nye County and Carson City.

It also includes Modoc, Nevada, Lassen, Plumas, Placer, Sierra, Eldorado, Alpine and Mono counties in California.

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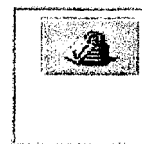
Subject: ABQjournal: Broadcast Alerts To Help Catch Kidnappers

Date: Fri, 13 Apr 2001 07:25:33 -0400

From: "Bud Gaylord" <bgaylord@ncmec.org> Internal

Organization: NCMEC

To: Joann Donnellan <Jdonnellan@ncmec.org>



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New Mexico
High Tech Jobs

Thursday, April 12, 2001

Broadcast Alerts To Help Catch Kidnappers

By John J. Lumpkin
Journal Staff Writer

The public will be alerted to child abductions using the emergency broadcast system, under an arrangement between local broadcasters and law enforcement, officials announced Wednesday.

This will allow the public to contact police if they see the kidnapper in the minutes following the abduction. The chance of finding kidnapping victims alive decreases dramatically as time goes on — the Justice Department estimates that 91 percent of children kidnapped by strangers are dead within 24 hours.

When police believe a child has been abducted by a stranger, they will contact Kkob-AM radio, which is the local outlet for the Emergency Alert System — the former Emergency Broadcast System, said Citadel Communications' Chief Engineer Mike Langner, director of the New Mexico emergency alert program.

The radio station will send the alert to local television and radio stations, which can break into programming to announce the abduction.

A simultaneous message in Spanish will be sent to KABQ-AM, which can transmit it to other Spanish-language stations, Langner said.

It is called an "Amber Alert," named for a 1996 kidnap and murder victim in Arlington, Texas. Similar systems are in place in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and are credited with saving eight children.

The system will not be used in custody battles or for runaways; only

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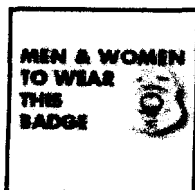
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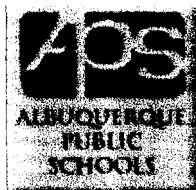
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when police have solid descriptions of the abductor and the child will it be activated.

So far, the Albuquerque Police Department and Bernalillo County Sheriff's Department have agreed to participate, as have most of the major local broadcasters, Langner said. He hopes other law enforcement agencies in the region also will use the service.

In a news conference Wednesday at Comanche Elementary School, broadcasters and police officials credited Rep. Heather Wilson, R-N.M., for pitching "Amber Alerts" a year ago.

"That's what this is all about — mobilizing people," she said.

Wilson said the program is being started at virtually no cost to taxpayers because it uses the existing emergency notification network.

Police officials hailed the program.

"We want to be able to respond (to an abduction) with every single resource we have available to us, and the Amber Alert will allow us to instantly mobilize radio listeners and TV viewers like never before," APD Chief Jerry Galvin said in a statement. "That's community policing at its best."



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**Texas family overjoyed after
"Amber Alert" ends after child
found**

Rhonda Hughes

DALLAS, FEB. 16 - An emotional day for one North Texas family after someone stole a man's car... while his child was inside. That lead to an "Amber Alert" that fortunately ended with smiles.

● COMPLETE STORY →

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"The angels watched over him all night... until he was found. I just thank God for that," those words from the boys grandmother.

Trina Ellis says having her grandson, Tredaviun Benton, home safe was an answer to her prayers.

"Earlier I was outside, looking up in the sky thinking this was such a big place for such a small fellow to be, by himself," Ellis said.

Police sounded the "Amber Alert" and searched all night for 6-year-old Tredaviun... after someone kidnapped him from an Albertson's parking lot in Duncanville.

Police say the boy's father ran in the store for just a minute - but left his sleeping son in the car, while it was running. When he came back a few minutes later - the car and his son were gone.

Ellis said, "I just want to see him. I just want to hear him call me granny again and then we'll be just fine." Tredaviun's granny got her chance... six hours later when police found the boy, still in the car - in Oak Cliff.

Officials say the may have run out of gas - so the suspect abandoned it.

Tredaviun's family says he was the only one who slept through the ordeal and after a day off from school he'll be back in class next week.

As for the person who took the car and the child from this store... police are still investigating.

It is illegal to leave a child unattended in a vehicle and to leave the keys in the ignition of a running car. But for now it does not look like any charges will be brought against the boy's father.

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Subject: HoustonChronicle.com

Date: Fri, 20 Apr 2001 08:15:55 -0400

From: "Bud Gaylord" <bgaylord@ncmec.org> Internal

Organization: NCMEC

To: Joann Donnellan <Jdonnellan@ncmec.org>

Charlie Apps <capps@ncmec.org>

Amber Alert success....

<http://www.chron.com/cs/CDA/story.hts/metropolitan/883737>

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April 19, 2001, 11:17PM

Printer-friendly format

Man arrested in abduction of 5-year-old

By JERRY URBAN and DALE LEZON
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Houston police arrested a man Thursday just hours after a 5-year-old girl was lured into a stolen ambulance and abducted.

The suspect, possibly involved in other attacks on children, was taken into custody -- thanks to a new media information system -- about 6:40 p.m. at an apartment complex in the 5600 block of Bissonnet in southwest Houston.

The child, Maria Cuellar, was found at the complex and appeared OK. However, she was taken to Texas Children's Hospital for examination.

Maria was kidnapped near her Fair Oaks Apartments complex in the 900 block of Fair Oaks in southeast Houston about 4 p.m.

Several other children were also lured into the ambulance after the man said he had a playroom inside. The other children got out before the

Houston Astros

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section D, page 3

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inside. The other children got out before the vehicle left with Maria inside.

Police homicide Sgt. C. B. Douglas said the ambulance had been stolen Wednesday while parked at an area senior citizens home.

An officer found the ambulance Thursday parked in the 7100 block of Atwell. The name of its operator, Unique Ambulance, had been spray painted over.

While the officer was investigating the ambulance as a suspicious vehicle, a man told him he had seen a child with a man who fit a media description of Maria's abductor.

The description was sent out over the new Amber Alert system that quickly alerts the public via the media to missing children.

The suspect, believed to be in his 20s and the child were located nearby shortly later. Charges were pending.

The girl's relatives and neighbors were relieved that police found her, but they remained frightened because the kidnapping happened so fast and in broad daylight.

"I feel a little better because they found her," said Emma Banegas, the girl's aunt, who was worn out from her emotions, her eyes red-rimmed from crying.

She took aspirin for her headache as she spoke with her husband and friends, and was anxious for her niece to come home.

"I'm going to hug and kiss her," she said.

Gilda Rodarte, the property manager, said her tenants were shocked by the abduction, saying nothing like it had ever happened in the area before.

The dozens of families in the two-story brick complex often leave their doors open on hot evenings, socializing with each other, Rodarte said.

"We all know each other," she said. "It's like a family. We've never been afraid."

She said most of the tenants have lived in the apartments for about five years.

"I'm kind of scared, because it could happen to anyone," said neighbor Teresa Alberto, 14.

Laura Campos, 12, one of Maria's close friends, said neighbors had searched the neighborhood when they found out she was gone.

Little children are prey for kidnappers who try to ply them with candy, Laura said, but she's too old to let them abduct her.

"I'm ready for that," Laura said. "I took a defense class, a martial arts class. In case anything happens, I know how to defend myself from those people."

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EXHIBIT E

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 605

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that communities should implement the Amber Plan to expedite the recovery of abducted children.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 2, 2000

Mrs. WILSON (for herself, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. BARTON of Texas, Mr. FROST, Mr. OXLEY, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. FOLEY, Mr. GREENWOOD, and Mr. VISCLOSKY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that communities should implement the Amber Plan to expedite the recovery of abducted children.

Whereas communities should implement an emergency alert plan such as the Amber Plan to expedite the recovery of abducted children;

Whereas the Amber Plan, a partnership between law enforcement agencies and media officials, assists law enforcement, parents, and local communities to respond immediately to the most serious child abduction cases;

Whereas the Amber Plan was created in 1996 in memory of 9-year-old Amber Hagerman who was kidnapped and murdered in Arlington, Texas;

Whereas in response to community concern, the Association of Radio Managers with the assistance of area law enforcement in Arlington, Texas, created the Amber Plan;

Whereas, to date, the Amber Plan is credited with saving the lives of at least 9 children nationwide;

Whereas the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children endorses the Amber Plan and is promoting the use of such emergency alert plans nationwide;

Whereas the Amber Plan is responsible for reuniting children with their searching parents: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
2 resentatives that Amber Plan is a powerful tool in fighting
3 child abductions and should be used across the United
4 States.

○

BONO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 893.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SENSE OF HOUSE THAT COMMUNITIES SHOULD IMPLEMENT AMBER PLAN FOR RECOVERY OF ABDUCTED CHILDREN

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 605) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that communities should implement the Amber Plan to expedite the recovery of abducted children.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 605

Whereas communities should implement an emergency alert plan such as the Amber Plan to expedite the recovery of abducted children;

Whereas the Amber Plan, a partnership between law enforcement agencies and media officials, assists law enforcement, parents, and local communities to respond immediately to the most serious child abduction cases;

Whereas the Amber Plan was created in 1996 in memory of 9-year-old Amber Hagerman who was kidnapped and murdered in Arlington, Texas;

Whereas in response to community concern, the Association of Radio Managers with the assistance of area law enforcement in Arlington, Texas, created the Amber Plan;

Whereas, to date, the Amber Plan is credited with saving the lives of at least 9 children nationwide;

Whereas the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children endorses the Amber Plan and is promoting the use of such emergency alert plans nationwide;

Whereas the Amber Plan is responsible for reuniting children with their searching parents: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that Amber Plan is a powerful tool in fighting child abductions and should be used across the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Res. 605.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 605, introduced by the gentleman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON). This resolution will express the sense of the House of Representatives that communities across the United

States should implement what has become known as the Amber Plan to help find and recover children who have been abducted.

Crimes committed against our children is a serious problem in the United States. Congress has played a significant role in our national struggle to protect children by providing grant money to the States to fight crime committed against children and by passing tough new Federal laws to prosecute criminals who victimize children. But of course most of the work to prevent these crimes and punish those who commit them occurs at the local level.

Today Congress has an opportunity to bring national attention to an effective program working at the local level called the Amber Plan. This program, begun in Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, helps save the lives of children who have been kidnapped. The Amber Plan was created in 1996 in memory of 9-year-old Amber Hagerman who was tragically kidnapped and murdered in Arlington, Texas. Because of its success in Dallas-Fort Worth, it has been replicated in communities across the country.

The Amber Plan works by utilizing the national Emergency Alert System. When a child is reported abducted, the abduction, including the description of the alleged perpetrator, is immediately broadcast by local radio and television stations using the Emergency Alert System. These alerts get the word to everyone who might recognize the child or might recognize the abductor and then call the police. Since its inception, the Amber Plan has led to the safe recovery of at least nine children nationwide.

The use of the Emergency Alert System to blanket broadcast areas with the news that a child has been abducted is a wonderful idea. Any time a crime such as a kidnapping is committed, quick action can make all the difference in whether the criminal gets away with his crime or is apprehended.

I want to thank the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON) for her leadership on this issue. I urge all my colleagues to support the resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 605 which would express the sense of the House of Representatives that communities should implement the Amber Plan to expedite the recovery of abducted children.

The Amber Plan provides for community law enforcement, radio and television stations to work together to alert the public of child abductions.

Under the plan, the law enforcement alerts the media which interrupt programs to broadcast notices seeking help from the public when child abductions are reported and confirmed.

The Amber Plan was created in December 1996 in memory of 9-year-old

Amber Hagerman who was kidnapped and murdered in Arlington, Texas. Since its creation, the system has become a powerful tool, especially in the early hours of an abduction investigation, and is credited with saving the lives of at least nine children nationwide.

1530

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, a respected organization dedicated to assisting families in recovering missing children, has endorsed the Amber Plan and is directing its expansion. Versions of the plan have been adopted in several cities already, including Kansas City, Missouri; Memphis, Tennessee; Charlotte, North Carolina; and Cincinnati, Ohio.

Mr. Speaker, the Amber Plan deserves our wholehearted support. It provides for a partnership between law enforcement, the media, and the community which can mean the difference between life and death for a child. I commend those who developed the plan and urge my colleagues to vote for this resolution.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 605, which expresses the Sense of the House that communities should implement the Amber Plan to expedite the recovery of abducted children.

The Amber Plan is a partnership between law enforcement agencies and media officials, assists law enforcement, parents, and local communities to respond immediately to the most serious child abduction cases. The Amber Plan was created in 1996 in memory of 9-year-old Amber Hagerman who was kidnapped and murdered in Arlington, Texas. In response to community concern, regarding the abduction of Amber Hagerman, the Association of Radio Managers with the assistance of area law enforcement in Arlington, Texas created the Amber Plan. To date, the Amber Plan is credited with saving the lives of at least 9 children nationwide.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children endorses the Amber Plan and is promoting the use of such emergency alert plans nationwide. For this reason, I believe that the Amber Plan does offer useful tools to those who are in need of resources in the search for tools to fight child abductions and should be used across the United States.

Mrs. WILSON. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 605 expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that communities should implement the Amber Plan to expedite the recovery of abducted children.

Mr. Speaker, when a child is abducted, the family's anguish and fear is beyond measure. The Amber Plan was created to quickly enlist the public as partners with law enforcement and the news media to intervene before an abduction ends in serious injury or death for an innocent child.

The plan was created in 1996 in memory of 9-year-old Amber Hagerman who was kidnapped and murdered in Arlington, Texas. To date, the plan is credited with saving the lives of at least 9 children nationwide.

This is how the plan works: When a child is reported abducted, law enforcement notifies local television and radio stations. Both TV

and radio announcements are broadcast describing the child and other details. The public is given phone number to call if they see the child. House Resolution 605 calls upon communities across the U.S. to implement their own Amber Alert programs to assist locally in the recovery of abducted children. House Resolution 605 has been endorsed by the National center for Missing and Exploited Children. They are working to bring this program to cities and towns nationwide and I commended them for their efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank my colleague Mr. LAMPSON from Texas for his assistance with this resolution and commend him as the Chairman of the Missing and Exploited Children's Caucus.

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker. I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 605, a resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that communities should implement the Amber Plan to expedite the recovery of abducted children.

Amber Hagerman, a 9-year-old from Arlington, Texas, was abducted in front of witnesses in 1996. Her body was found 4 days later. After this tragedy, police and local radio station developed the "Amber Plan", named in honor of Amber Hagerman—which was the first use of the Emergency Alert System (EAS), formerly the Emergency Broadcast System, to report a missing child. Under the plan, television and radio stations interrupt programming to broadcast information about a child abduction by using the EAS, a system typically used for weather or other civil emergencies. Since the Amber plan was established in Texas, many areas across the country have adopted a similar emergency alert plan on the local, regional, and even statewide-level. Between 1996 and 2000, these plans have been credited with the safe return of at least nine children.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has endorsed the use of the "AMBER Plan"—America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response—to assist in the recovery of missing children. The plan is simple—to alert the public as quickly as possible of a child abduction in hopes of gaining information leading to the safe recovery of that child and capture of the abductor.

Mr. Speaker, children are snatched off the street everyday in America. Tragically, some are never returned to their caretakers, and many are victims of assault and murder. A 1997 study by the Washington States Attorney indicated that 74 percent of children abducted and murdered by strangers were killed within three hours of being taken.

Realizing that time is of the essence in these cases, this resolution encourages states and communities to recognize that the abduction of a child is of the highest priority for response and investigation. In furtherance of this type of investigation, a carefully planned and quick notification of the public in the area of the abduction by commercial broadcast methods, the "AMBER Plan", can be a valuable tool in the quick recovery of abducted children.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this resolution.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 605, which recognizes the importance of the Amber Plan to families across the country, and encourages other communities to implement the plan. I want to thank Mrs. WILSON and Nick LAMPSON

for their efforts in bringing this resolution to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, the Amber Plan was created in memory of Amber Hagerman, a nine-year-old girl from Arlington, Texas who was tragically abducted and murdered in 1996. Amber was bright and pretty and was riding her bike on January 13 when someone came along and took her away. This case occurred in my congressional district, but I am sure that events like this have happened—sadly—in every corner of our country, in our cities and in the heartlands.

This case caused the police and broadcasters in the North Texas area to look at how they could better protect our community's children. Now once police have received a report of child abduction, they fax information to area media outlets. Broadcast stations then sound an emergency tone during broadcasts—similar to a weather alert—which is followed by the information from police. It gives a description of the children who are missing, the vehicle that they were kidnapped in, and a description of the kidnappers. It also gives a number that people can call to report information. The Amber Plan treats a child abduction like the entire community's emergency, and enlists their help to find the kidnappers.

The success of the Amber Plan in North Texas has led several other communities to implement the plan. Just recently, I spoke with a radio station in Oklahoma, where the state's first use of the Amber Alert led to the successful recovery of two children during a car theft. The State of Florida just recently implemented the system statewide. And the National Center of Missing and Exploited Children is working on implementing the system in a number of other major metropolitan areas.

Last year, I hosted members of the Amber Plan Task Force at a meeting in the Capitol. They addressed Members of Congress about the effectiveness of the Amber Plan in North Texas, and how it can be expanded to their own congressional districts. The group also met with officials from the National Association of Broadcasters and encouraged them to inform their members about expanding the Amber Plan throughout the country.

Along with Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. FRANKS, and several other Members, I am one of the founding members of the Missing and Exploited Children's Caucus. Members of the Caucus know that each year hundred of thousands of American families are confronted with the tragedy of a missing child. This resolution helps remind us that we must constantly work to increase the awareness of these tragic occurrences and to introduce legislation to combat these heinous crimes.

Whoever took Amber didn't know and didn't care that she was an honor student who made all As and Bs. They didn't care that she was a Brownie who had lots of friends and who loved her little brother dearly. They didn't care that her whole life was ahead of her and that their parents wanted to watch her grow into the lovely young woman she promised to be.

Mr. Speaker, we all need to get involved—parents, relatives, politicians, police and other enforcement agencies—to direct attention to the problem of missing children. It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that someday we will not need the Amber Plan to combat the growing epidemic of missing and exploited children. It is my hope that someday every child in America will feel safe. It is my hope that someday

every child will feel secure while riding his or her bicycle in the neighborhood. It is my hope that someday no parent will ever have to face the tragedy that Amber Hagerman's parents had to face. But until that day comes, we need to support this resolution and work together to protect this country's greatest asset—our children.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join my colleagues in support of this resolution. The Amber program is a great example of law enforcement, the local media and communities coming together to save lives. Today, our children face many obstacles and we need to do what ever we can to ensure their safety. In The Dallas-Fort Worth area Amber program has been successful in the recovery of abducted children.

While we cannot prevent every child abduction, it is important for local communities to respond immediately to child abduction cases and reunite them with their parents as soon as possible. In my district, a young girl was abducted recently. The abductor took the girl on a bicycle to a nearby bus station and then boarded a bus to Florida. This all happened within 20 or 30 minutes. Had the Amber plan been implemented, media outlets would have been interrupted immediately to report a description of the abductor and the location where the abduction took place. This would have saved time and possibly prevented the abductor from getting on that bus to Florida with the child. Fortunately, the young girl was found safely. Unfortunately, it doesn't always end this way.

Since last year, I have been working with law enforcement agencies in the Houston and Harris County area, and our local media, to establish a plan similar to the Amber program. The plan, which is still under development by the Amber Plan Subcommittee, should be operational by January 2001. It will be a cooperative public service effort between 36 law enforcement agencies in the five-county area Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Montgomery, and Waller counties and 40 local radio, television stations, cable systems.

Chuck Wolf, Chairman of the Emergency Alert System and Mark McCoy, station manager of KTRH radio station in Houston have been instrumental in the development of this program. It is important to point out that in order to activate the Houston Regional Amber Plan strict criteria must be met. It has to go through a screening process before it is activated. Once it is activated, we have to make sure that the emergency alert message is sent quickly and is easy to understand—it can only be activated if it passes a screening process.

Law enforcement, local media outlets, and communities will collaborate to make sure that the requirements are met and that the emergency alert is activated properly. However, we also need for the Federal Communications Commission to take part in this effort. Currently, broadcasters are limited by the types of codes they can use to describe the alert event. I urge the FCC to expand event codes that will specifically describe if it is an Amber Alert, hazardous and environmental disaster, or any other man made disaster. We must utilize our available technology effectively to protect our citizens and specially our children from all types of disasters and civil disturbances.

I strongly support this resolution and urge other Members to encourage their communities to implement similar programs.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 605, which was introduced by the Gentlelady from New Mexico, Mrs. WILSON. H. Res. 605 expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that communities should implement the "Amber Plan" to expedite the recovery of abducted children. As we all know, the problem of missing and abducted children is a continuing national concern. Few things are as disturbing to us as crimes committed against kids, and Congress should do all it can to reduce the threat to our children.

H. Res. 605 is a simple resolution that highlights the "Amber Plan," a very effective partnership between law enforcement and the media in Dallas-Fort Worth that has helped save the lives of kids who have been kidnapped. The resolution urges the replication of the Amber Plan in communities across America.

The Amber Plan was created in 1996 in memory of 9-year-old Amber Hagerman, who was tragically kidnapped and murdered in Arlington, Texas. Since then, many communities across the United States have put similar plans into effect. It is credited with the safe return of at least nine abducted children nationwide. Here's how it works. When a child is reported abducted, the abduction—including a description of the alleged perpetrator—is immediately flashed across local radio and television stations using the Emergency Alert System, what used to be known as the Emergency Broadcast System. This quick action alerts the community to the abduction, and it has apparently spooked child abductors into releasing their victims when they hear descriptions of themselves broadcast on the radio or TV.

Quick action is often necessary to thwart the commission of crime, and the Amber Plan is a great idea that ought to be put in place in every city and town across America. I want to thank the Gentlelady for her leadership on this issue, and I urge all my colleagues to support the resolution.

Mr. VISCLOSKEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for House Resolution 605 introduced by Representative WILSON. I would also like to applaud the efforts of the Missing and Exploited Children Caucus for raising the awareness of such issues. H. Res. 605 expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that communities should implement the Amber Alert Plan to expedite the recovery of abducted children. The Amber Alert Plan was created in 1996 in memory of 9-year-old Amber Hagerman who was kidnapped and murdered in Arlington, Texas. The Alert has been credited with saving the lives of at least 9 children nationwide.

Last year in Northwest Indiana, more than 1,600 children were reported missing. When a child is abducted, time is the most important factor in determining whether that child will return home alive. Due to the Amber Plan's proven track record of success, I initiated the Alert in my district on April 4, 2000. The Amber Alert is a joint effort between media outlets and police departments that enlists the help of the public to put more eyes on the look out for a missing child. In the event of an abduction, radio, and television stations provide quick, police-generated reports on the child. The notification plan commonly begins with a high-pitched tone and is followed by detailed information about the missing child or kidnapping suspect. A phone number is then given

for the public to call if they see either the child or the suspect. Police are careful not to overuse the Amber Plan, carefully evaluating the circumstances of a missing child report before sounding the alert. I truly believe that the Amber Alert will be a valuable resource in my district in the effort to assist localities in the timely return of any missing child.

I support the efforts of communities across the U.S. in implementing their own Amber Alert programs to assist in the recovery of abducted children. This resolution has been endorsed by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which continues to work tirelessly to implement this program nationwide. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution in an effort to combat child abduction and protect our children.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HANSEN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 605.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AMERICA'S LAW ENFORCEMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 1865) to provide grants to establish demonstration mental health courts.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 1865

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "America's Law Enforcement and Mental Health Project".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) fully 16 percent of all inmates in State prisons and local jails suffer from mental illness, according to a July, 1999 report, conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics;

(2) between 600,000 and 700,000 mentally ill persons are annually booked in jail alone, according to the American Jail Association;

(3) estimates say 25 to 40 percent of America's mentally ill will come into contact with the criminal justice system, according to National Alliance for the Mentally Ill;

(4) 75 percent of mentally ill inmates have been sentenced to time in prison or jail or probation at least once prior to their current sentence, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics in July, 1999; and

(5) Broward County, Florida and King County, Washington, have created separate Mental Health Courts to place nonviolent mentally ill offenders into judicially monitored in-patient and out-patient mental health treatment programs, where appropriate, with positive results.

SEC. 3. MENTAL HEALTH COURTS.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 is

amended by inserting after part U (42 U.S.C. 3796hh et seq.) the following:

"PART V—MENTAL HEALTH COURTS

"SEC. 2201. GRANT AUTHORITY.

"The Attorney General shall make grants to States, State courts, local courts, units of local government, and Indian tribal governments, acting directly or through agreements with other public or nonprofit entities, for not more than 100 programs that involve—

"(1) continuing judicial supervision, including periodic review, over preliminarily qualified offenders with mental illness, mental retardation, or co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorders, who are charged with misdemeanors or nonviolent offenses; and

"(2) the coordinated delivery of services, which includes—

"(A) specialized training of law enforcement and judicial personnel to identify and address the unique needs of a mentally ill or mentally retarded offender;

"(B) voluntary outpatient or inpatient mental health treatment, in the least restrictive manner appropriate, as determined by the court, that carries with it the possibility of dismissal of charges or reduced sentencing upon successful completion of treatment;

"(C) centralized case management involving the consolidation of all of a mentally ill or mentally retarded defendant's cases, including violations of probation, and the coordination of all mental health treatment plans and social services, including life skills training, such as housing placement, vocational training, education, job placement, health care, and relapse prevention for each participant who requires such services; and

"(D) continuing supervision of treatment plan compliance for a term not to exceed the maximum allowable sentence or probation for the charged or relevant offense and, to the extent practicable, continuity of psychiatric care at the end of the supervised period.

"SEC. 2202. DEFINITIONS.

"In this part—

"(1) the term 'mental illness' means a diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder—

"(A) of sufficient duration to meet diagnostic criteria within the most recent edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association; and

"(B) that has resulted in functional impairment that substantially interferes with or limits 1 or more major life activities; and

"(2) the term 'preliminarily qualified offender with mental illness, mental retardation, or co-occurring mental and substance abuse disorders' means a person who—

"(A)(i) previously or currently has been diagnosed by a qualified mental health professional as having a mental illness, mental retardation, or co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorders; or

"(ii) manifests obvious signs of mental illness, mental retardation, or co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorders during arrest or confinement or before any court; and

"(B) is deemed eligible by designated judges.

"SEC. 2203. ADMINISTRATION.

"(a) CONSULTATION.—The Attorney General shall consult with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and any other appropriate officials in carrying out this part.

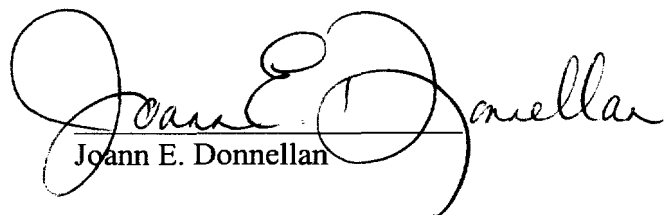
"(b) USE OF COMPONENTS.—The Attorney General may utilize any component or components of the Department of Justice in carrying out this part.

"(c) REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—The Attorney General shall issue regulations and

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Joann E. Donnellan, hereby certify that
on this 8th day of June, 2001, I caused NCMEC comments to the Commission's
notice of proposed rulemaking *Amendment of Part 11 of the Commission's Rules Regarding the
Emergency Alert System* to be filed with the Commission by courier to the following:

Commission's Secretary
Magalie Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Room TW-A325
Washington, D.C. 20554


Joann E. Donnellan

Please distribute original and 14 copies as follows:

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